

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 SAM-01 ACDA-05 EA-07 EB-07 OMB-01

TRSE-00 BIB-01 COME-00 /092 W
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R 011150Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4340

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 3064

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETEL, PFOR, IN, UR

SUBJ: MRS GANDHI'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

REF: NEW DELHI 3976

1. WE HEAR FROM SEVERAL SOURCES NOW THAT PM GANDHI WILL PROBABLY MAKE HER VISIT TO MOSCOW IN LATE MARCH-EARLY APRIL, BARRING UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS EITHER ON THE INDIAN OR SOVIET SIDE. ASKED ABOUT AN APRIL DATE, HOWEVER, SOVIET COUNSELOR FIALKOVSKY, ON FEB 26, SAID APRIL NO, "LATE MARCH MAYBE." THE BRITISH HERE, WHO PUT THE QUESTION, HAVE A REPORT FROM A PRESS SOURCE THAT MRS GANDHI WILL BE IN MOSCOW MARCH 25-28 ACCOMPANIED BY DEFENCE MINISTER BANSAL LAL AND WILL SIGN A NEW ARMS AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIETS AT THAT TIME. JAPANESE EMB ALSO UNDERSTANDS (FROM CPI SOURCE) THAT VISIT WILL BE AT THE END OF MARCH.

2. WELL-PLACED INDIAN CORRESPONDENT TOLD EMBOFF LAST NIGHT THAT HE UNDERSTOOD GOI INFO-BROADCASTING MINISTER SHUKLA'S VISIT TO MOSCOW RELATED TO INDIAN SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVE TO US TV TELECOMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE. THE
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BRITISH HAVE A SIMILAR REPORT SOURCED TO THE INDIAN EMBASSY MOSCOW. JAPANESE EMBOFF HAS ALSO HEARD THAT

SHUKLA WAS LOOKING FOR TV SATELLITE ASSISTANCE.
ALTHOUGH ABSENT DETAILS DESCRIBED REFTEL, WE READ THIS
AS PARTIAL CORROBORATION OF REPORT IN REFTEL. SHUKLA
HIMSELF DECLINED TO BE DRAWN INTO COMMENT ON THE MOSCOW
VISIT IN BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF AT EMBASSY
RECEPTION FEB 27. JAPANESE INFORMATION IS THAT SOVS
TOLD SHUKLA THAT IF MAJOR SATELLITE/COMMUNICATIONS
PROGRAM WAS AT TOP OF GOI DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE AND
GOI CONFIRMED THIS WAS THE CASE, THEY WOULD AGREE TO
LOOK AT POSSIBILITIES BUT OTHERWISE WERE ESSENTIALLY
NONCOMMITTAL.
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